

Findings from Rotary Member Survey

October 12, 2023

Harbor Country Rotary conducted a survey of its members in September 2023 to learn more about views of our weekly meeting, and potential interest in shifting one meeting a month to another day and time (and potentially location and format as well). A total of 38, or 70%, of our members participated.

The findings from the survey are outlined below. Members interested in perusing the dataset can find it at <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1QAkfQcz7Etnn-SwGM4eefd-5f3SCGkGF3e4g7X2mJCU/edit#slide=id.p>

Current Meeting Findings

We asked members to rate our meetings overall, and specific attributes of our meetings, on a 1-5 scale where 5 means highly satisfied, 1 means not satisfied at all, with 2,3, and 4 in between. In addition, we asked them for any additional thoughts they had on each attribute. Their responses are provided below as “mean scores.” This means we’ve calculated an “average” rating for each attribute.

Generally speaking, consumer scores for such evaluations, if in the 4+ range, signify a high level of satisfaction. And for every aspect of our meetings except meeting time, members appear quite pleased. Interestingly, the highest-rated attribute is “overall satisfaction,” which suggests that the current meetings are evaluated by members as, overall, very satisfying, beyond any one attribute. The whole appears to be greater than the sum of the parts.

Attribute	Mean score
Time of Meeting	3.4
Clean-up system	4.1
Balance of activities	4.2
Location	4.3
Food	4.3
Day of week	4.3
Speakers	4.4
Activities at meeting	4.5
Overall satisfaction	4.6

Comments regarding potential improvements

While overall satisfaction levels are very high, a number of suggestions were made, listed below. Most have to do with the related attributes of breakfast prep and clean-up, with timing also getting quite a bit of attention.

Breakfasts

- Volunteer breakfasts are a nuisance. Acoustics are terrible, sound system helps if people use it correctly. Speakers are improving.
- I think the focus should be on club activities, not who signs up for breakfast and who cleans up
- Simplify breakfast. Maybe bagels fruit and coffee.
- I would like to see something more consistent with food at the meetings. I think it's becoming an imposition for some members to be responsible for bringing the amount of food we need for our breakfasts. I'm not sure what an alternative might be.
- Would like a different method for serving breakfast so members do not feel pressure to make breakfast
- Recently, I happened to hear a bit of a discussion between Brendan and Linda about making the breakfast easier/simpler; keep some staples in the fridge, etc. That would help those of us who tend to be a bit anxious about providing food for others, as well as those who don't have the time.
- I do not like having to cook breakfast for a crowd. It is time consuming, costly, and annoying. The "idea" became popular and rationalized by past leadership to keep dues low. It is time to put some effort into researching other possible options.
- Eliminate breakfast assignments and provide bagels and donuts before the meeting starts.

Clean-up

- Assign clean up people monthly so it doesn't fall to the same handful of people.
- And then it also seems like the cleanup is the responsibility of the same people every week. Again, I am not sure how to rectify that, and I have never heard a complaint by the people who are actually doing the cleanup.
- It is often brought up that more help is needed for clean-up, but no one is really in charge. The few times I have stayed, I just kind of feel like I'm in the way and everyone else knows what needs to be done.
- Cleanup after the meeting seems to fall to the same people. I don't know if there's a way to get a rotation of members doing it.
- I said I don't like the clean-up, as I think it falls on the same folks too much, not sure how you change this.

Speakers

- Speakers often seem unprepared. We probably should give them a sense of what we're looking for.

- When we don't have outside speakers, I don't really enjoy the meetings. I prefer learning more about our community in meetings.
- It is very difficult to hear in the large space. The sound really takes away from the quality of the meetings and speakers.

Timing

- The early morning meetings are really challenging
- I recognize that there is no perfect time for a meeting, but Fridays and the early morning/breakfast have become more challenging for me to attend.
- Meet later in the day
- The extreme early morning time is very difficult, especially during winter months when it is dark in Western Michigan at the start and end of meetings (Jan-March)
- The time and day of week is ok, neither good nor bad. 8:00 start much better than 7:30
- Professionally, I've experienced meeting burnout and weekly meetings often feel excessive to me. I believe every other week and then committees meeting more often on actionable items is a better use of my time. I'm aware other Clubs have gone to 2-3 meetings per month. I suspect the long-time members prefer to meeting weekly as they appear to enjoy this format.
- Make some of the meetings either lunch time or after hours

Member Interaction

- We need to have members mix up and sit with others. We have some members who consistently sit with the same people / at the same table week after week. We are missing opportunities for interacting with one another.
- I always like more time for member interaction. It's one of the things that make me feel like a member

Effect of lower-rated attributes on participation from members' vantage points

One person mentioned disliking the mix of current activities enough that it may limit their involvement in the future. Everyone else who discussed their participation said their low ratings of some attributes will have no effect.

Proposed Evening Meeting Findings

We also asked members to assess the overall appeal of an evening meeting once a month, their perceived likelihood to attend such a meeting, and several possible attributes of such a meeting. They evaluated these questions using a 1-5 rating system like what was used to assess current meetings, as well as making individual comments to elaborate. Both response types are provided below.

Broadly speaking, the concept of an evening meeting once a month to replace one morning meeting was well-received, as were several attributes. In addition, it appears that the closer in format such an evening meeting is to our morning meetings, the more appealing it might be.

That said, the range of answers, overall, received lower mean scores than those for our current morning meetings. So there may be reason for some caution here. Still, the core question of perceived likelihood of attendance at an evening meeting was the highest rated of any question asked about it, with a mean score of 3.8.

In addition, numerous people said that even though they personally prefer morning meetings, they see a benefit to the club in offering one evening meeting a month, and so, overall, support the concept. This suggests that, provided we develop an evening meeting in a way aligned with member preferences, it may work well for most members, and attract members who currently have difficulty with morning meetings.

Attribute	Mean score
Shorter meeting than current	2.3
Locations other than church	2.9
Alcohol/socialize afterward	3.3
Thursday instead of Friday	3.7
Overall appeal	3.8
Perceived likelihood of attend	3.8

Time of Day Preferences

Respondents were asked about which of two start-time options, 5:30 or 7pm, would be more desirable for them. 72% said 7pm, with 28% preferring 5:30.

Comments About a Potential Evening Meeting

Positives Around a Switch

- I'm retired 😊 I'm flexible
- I like having a regularly scheduled meeting. I don't have to think twice about it. Friday morning is Rotary, period. But, I am happy to go along with moving a meeting to afternoon/evening if that will be helpful to other people.
- A nice change in routine which can quickly be discontinued if it doesn't work
- When short days and long nights appear, getting up and out to a 7:30 am meeting is tough.
- I have greater availability in the evening.
- Change of pace, reach people who can't do mornings.
- For members who can't, or don't, want to attend a 7:30 am meeting, it will give an option to attend a meeting.

- You don't have to get up early.
- I am very satisfied with the morning meetings. However, I understand that it can be difficult for some members to attend consistently in the early morning. An early evening meeting once a month would provide more opportunities for all members to attend.
- I would be able to attend.
- An evening meeting may be a nice change of pace and possibly a nicer "intro" time for prospective members. I was a little intimidated coming alone to my first meeting :) Also, my husband could come to those meetings and see what we are up to!
- I would like there to be an evening option but doesn't replace Friday Morning
- Good for variety, and hopefully good for members and new members who cannot attend an early morning meeting. Parents may have difficulty as they get children out the door for school.
- I could more easily convince prospective members to attend.
- Basically willing to try, but presently [sic] happy with the way things are
- Variety
- It's a great idea because some people aren't able to attend the early morning meeting.
- There are some Friday mornings that I find difficult to wake up from. It would be nice to have alternate meeting time. There might also be some members that I don't see in morning meetings that would attend an afternoon or evening meeting so I'd get to know them better.
- Change of pace.
- Able to attend
- Meetings first thing eat up nearly 3 hours of productivity for me, getting household ready, commuting, meeting, etc. Later in day is less of a stressor and has less of an impact on what I need to accomplish that day
- Different time of day brings different people and attitudes to the meeting
- My schedule doesn't always permit early meeting attendance.
- I prefer mornings, so there's nothing that could be done to make an evening one better for me. But I realize it might be better for including members who can't do mornings easily.
- I would plan/try to make the weekly meeting whatever time it's called.
- How you perceive a meetings effectiveness has a lot to do with the current leader and their style. With President's changing annually, that's hard if style isn't a draw. I think a different meeting time has the possibility of drawing a more diverse group of members and with luck, that leads to more impact on community
- Since I work and I have many scheduled meetings in the morning, a PM would be another opportunity to attend meetings that I may not be able to attend in the AM.
- I will still be active but I think I will be able to enjoy getting to know other members better with a relaxed evening gathering.
- Though I would like a later meeting time, I am committed to the club and will continue to come to meetings when I am in town. This year I will be doing extensive travel and will miss many meetings.
- I would be able to attend.

Negatives Around a Switch

- I don't think it will be attended as well as the morning meetings
- Personal preference
- The current meeting time works for me.
- I like mornings. It keeps the rest of the day open.
- I work 7 days a week so 8 am is the most predictable
- I think it would attract different people and diversify the club. However changing the meeting time once a month could be confusing to members and create annoyance. If I got up at 7:30 and came to a meeting and it was the week it was changed, it would be terrible. It might even turn me off to the club in general.
- I think it will divide the club.
- That's when I plan personal activities and would probably miss more meetings.
- Don't like that it breaks up the day. Potential for more scheduling conflicts.
- I'd constantly forget which evenings are which and I often have other things come up during the day that would prevent me from attending
- If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Responses to Specific Proposed Attributes

Location

- Meeting elsewhere might incur a cost. And I think we already cram quite a bit into our one hour. Less than an hour would feel even more rushed.
- I am very satisfied with our current meeting location and don't see the need to change to a different location if we meet on Thursday evening.
- Meet in a location that doesn't echo.

Meeting length

- The one-hour meeting seems like just the right amount of time.
- Shortening the meeting seems unrealistic if we have business and a speaker.
- The meeting is barely long enough as it is. Not sure what we would cut out or why.
- I don't think an evening meeting needs to be shorter
- I'm not sure that a shorter meeting would work unless we didn't have a speaker. But having a good speaker could be part of the attraction for prospective members.
- Think the one-hour meeting is good. Doesn't need to be shorter
- Not sure why a meeting less than an hour would be worth my time.
- I feel we need to have the 1 hr. meeting in the PM to have the same impact as the early meeting.

Socializing/Alcohol Afterward

- Socializing at a restaurant every week is not something I would do, but once in a while would be great.
- As for alcohol and socializing, I'm reluctant to encourage that with people driving home after a drink or two. And yet, People do that all the time and do not have problems. I'm just feeling a little cautious about encouraging drinking and driving.

Time of Meeting

- I'm not interested in a regular social, so 5:30 works best and dinner with family, etc. still an option.

Other

- Specific signup and responsibility for cleanup
- We should not replace the Friday meeting and just have an evening meeting too